

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10396

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TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: SOCIALIST CONDITIONS FOR STAYING IN GOVERNMENT

REF: ROME 10278

1. DE MARTINO CANCELLED HIS APPOINTMENT WITH EMBOFF BECAUSE OF PSI DIRECTORATE MEETING. HOWEVER, EMBOFF HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS DE MARTINO'S VIEWS AT LENGTH WITH HIS SPECIAL ASSISTANT (AIELLO). FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE BY AIELLO WHICH ARE PROBABLY A FAIRLY ACCURATE REPRESENTATION OF DE MARTINO'S VIEWS.

2. RELATIONS WITH ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI): FOR THE LONG TERM PSI IS WORRIED ABOUT, AND FRIGHTENED OF, THE PCI. PSI IS NOT CONVINCED THAT THE PCI IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNIST PARTIES OR THAT IT IS OR WILL REMAIN DEMOCRATIC. MANY OF PRESENT PCI LEADERS ARE THOUGHT TO BE DEMOCRATS OF GOOD WILL BUT IT IS FAR FROM CERTAIN THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN IF THE PCI ACQUIRED CONTROL OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. BY THE SAME TOKEN, PSI IS CONVINCED THAT IF PSI AND PCI ACQUIRED A MAJORITY OF THE VOTES AT THE NEXT ELECTION, AND FORMED A COALITION GOVERNMENT, SOONER OR LATER THE PSI WOULD BE ELIMINATED. FOR ALL OF THESE REASONS, PSI IS DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR MEANS TO STOP THE PCI AND TO PRESERVE ITSELF. PSI VIEWS JUNE 15 ELECTIONS AS DEMONSTRATING THAT THOSE (PCI) IN OPPOSITION TO CHRISTIAN
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DEMOCRATIC BAD GOVERNMENT GAINED THE MOST WHILE THOSE (PSI)

OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT, BUT NONETHELESS SUPPORTING IT, GAINED FAR LESS. THE ONLY AVAILABLE SOLUTION THUS APPEARS TO THE PSI TO BE THAT OF BRINGING PCI INTO THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM. THIS IS, ACCORDING TO AIELLO, BEST DONE NOW WHEN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES STILL HAVE A MAJORITY AND CAN CONTROL THE PCI. THE PSI DOES NOT ENVISAGE GIVING THE PCI POSTS IN THE GOVERNMENT OR IN THE PARLIAMENT, BUT RATHER ENVISAGES A PROCESS OF CONSULTATION BETWEEN PSI, PCI, AND DC ON THE PROGRAM TO BE PURSUED BY THE DC-PSI GOVERNMENT. THIS PROCESS WOULD COMMIT THE PCI TO THE PROGRAM AND THEREBY PREVENT IT FROM PROFITING FROM A CRITICAL, OPPOSITION ROLE.

3. ECONOMIC SITUATION: AIELLO REMARKED BITTERLY THAT THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN SAVED BY THE CENTRAL BANK AT THE EXPENSE OF RUINOUS RECESSION/INFLATION AND A HIGH LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT. HE SAID THAT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS CRITICAL AND CANNOT BE SOLVED WITHOUT THE COOPERATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT IT COULD NOT BE SOLVED WITHOUT FAR-REACHING CHANGES IN MEN AND POLICY IN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

4. ON OTHER SUBJECTS AIELLO MADE THE FOLLOWING BRIEF COMMENTS: (1) THE SOCIALIST PARTY CONGRESS WOULD PROBABLY BE HELD IN LATER NOVEMBER ALTHOUGH THE DATE HAS NOT YET BEEN SET. (2) NITTERAND'S PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF LATIN SOCIALIST PARTIES HAS NOT YET GOTTEN OFF THE GROUND, NOR IS IT CLEAR EXACTLY WHAT ITS PURPOSE WOULD BE. (3) WHILE THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL IS TRAGIC, AIELLO DOUBTED THAT WHATEVER THE OUTCOME IT WOULD HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN ITALY, PRIMARILY BECAUSE ITALIAN VOTERS PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO EXTERNAL EVENTS AND BECAUSE OF PCI GAINS IN PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE IN RECENT YEARS AS A DEMOCRATIC PARTY (I.E., DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE IN PORTUGAL).

5. COMMENT: IN THE COURSE OF THIS CONVERSATION, EMBOFF STATED CLEARLY USG POSITION ON COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO EXPRESSED PROFOUND SCEPTICISM ABOUT THE WORKABILITY AND DESIRABILITY OF AIELLO'S PROPOSED ROLE FOR THE PCI (PARA 2 ABOVE). JUDGING FROM THIS CONVERSATION, AS WELL AS OTHER DATA, THE SOCIALISTS ARE CLEARLY VERY WORRIED BOTH ABOUT THEIR OWN FUTURE AND THAT OF THE COUNTRY ITSELF. THEY ARE CONVINCED

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THAT THEY CANNOT SURVIVE IN PARTNERSHIP EITHER WITH THE DC OR WITH THE PCI. THEY ARE THUS DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR A POLICY WHICH CAN BRIDGE THAT GAP, AND THAT WILL AT THE SAME TIME AVOID THEIR GETTING SQUEEZED OUT BY A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE DC AND PCI (THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE). THE ONE THEY ARE CURRENTLY PURSUING (REFTEL) SEEKS TO COMMIT THE PCI TO A POLICY TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE PSI AND THE DC WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME GIVING THE PCI ANY OF THE BENEFITS THAT NORMALLY ACCOMPANY GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THE PCI WOULD FALL FOR THIS GAMBIT.
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